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## Report of the Secretary of the Navy.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, Dec. 5, 1853.

SIR: I have the honor to present the usual annual report from the Navy Department, exhibiting the condition of this branch of the public service, with a brief allusion to the operations of the several squadrons during the past year. I have ventured also to suggest for consideration certain views touching the increase of the naval force, the reorganization of the navy, and the modification of the laws and regulations for its government, from a conviction that many practical reforms may be introduced promotive of discipline and efficiency.

**Squadrons.**  
The home squadron, Commodore Newton, consists of the flag-ship, the frigate Columbia, Commander Pendergrast; the sloop-of-war Albany, Commander Gerry; the sloop-of-war Commodore Hollins, Commander Pendergrast; the sloop-of-war Commodore Watson, Commander Pendergrast; the sloop-of-war Commodore Swartwout. This latter vessel was despatched in the month of May to Tampico on special duty, and on her return to Pensacola was put out of commission on account of the appearance of yellow fever on board; which, in its fatal progress, deprived the service of many excellent men and faithful men. So soon as she shall be thoroughly disinfected and pronounced in a safe condition, she will be again put in commission, and continue attached to the home squadron.

In January last the Fulton, under the temporary command of Lieutenant Alexander Murray, was placed at the disposal of the late Hon. William R. King, for the purpose of conveying him to Havana for the restoration of his health; and the Commodore, after having her machinery repaired, she again joined the squadron.

The steamer Saranac, Captain J. C. Long, detailed for duty in the home squadron, after having conveyed the Chevalier de Sodre, late Brazilian charge d'affaires, to the seat of his government, joined the squadron in February, and remained attached to it until July, when, requiring repairs, she was withdrawn and put out of commission.

The vessels attached to this squadron have been cruising chiefly in the Gulf of Mexico and among the West India islands. Disturbances at San Juan or Greytown threatening the property and rights of American citizens, the Commodore Hollins, was ordered to visit that port. The presence of his ship had the desired effect. The conduct of Commodore Hollins evinced a gallantry and judgment which entitled him to the commendation of the department. The Albany relieved the Cyane, and remained at San Juan until her repairs were deemed no longer necessary.

The Brazil squadron, Commodore Salter, consists of the flag-ship Savannah, Commander Mercer, which sailed from Norfolk for her destination on the 14th of September, and the sloop-of-war Jamestown, Captain Downing.

The brig Bainbridge, Lieutenant Charles G. Hunter, sailed from New York on the 4th of November last to join this squadron, and on her arrival at the Jamestown will return home, by which time she will have been absent from the United States nearly three years.

The Germantown, Commander Lynch, also sailed from Boston on the 24th of December to join this squadron. The store-ship Relief, Lieutenant Hitchcock, returned from Rio on the 15th of April last, entering the port of New York, and on the 25th of July following was again sent out with stores for the squadron, under the command of Lieutenant A. B. Fairfax, and temporarily forms a part of it.

The steamer Michigan, Lieutenant Thos. J. Page, which left Norfolk on the 8th of February, though attached to this squadron, is not considered as one of the available vessels belonging to it—having, after a decree of the provisional director of the Argentine confederation, throwing open to navigation the tributaries of the La Plata, been detailed for the survey of the rivers Uruguay and Paraná. She arrived out at Buenos Ayres on the 26th of May, but was detained from the execution of her immediate duties by the state of civil war existing unhappily between the different provinces of the Argentine confederation, requiring her presence for the protection of the interests of American citizens engaged in commerce, or resident in that region. When last heard from, on the 30th of August, Lieutenant Page was expected to set out immediately on the appointed expedition.

Commander McKeever was in command of the Brazil squadron the earlier part of the year; and having completed a cruise of three years' active and efficient service, he returned in his flag-ship, the Congress, Commander Pearson, to the United States, on the 20th of July. The records of the Navy and State Departments furnish ample evidence that a portion of this squadron did good service in promoting the interests of the government, and protecting the rights of American citizens.

The African squadron, Commodore Mayo, consists of his flag-ship, the Constitution, Commander Ridd; the sloop Marion, Commander Purviance; and the brig Perry, Lieutenant R. L. Page. The Dale, Commander White, sailed from Boston to join this squadron on the 17th of October.

Commodore Lavelette returned from the command of this squadron in his flag-ship the sloop-of-war Germantown, Commander Nicholas, on the 30th of March. The John Adams, Commander Barron, and the brig Bainbridge, Commander John Manning, having been detached from this squadron, reached the United States, the former on the 22d of July, and the latter on the 26th of August.

Commander Lynch was temporarily attached by my predecessor to this squadron for a reconnaissance of the west coast of Africa, for the purpose of ascertaining the localities affording the greatest facilities for penetrating the interior of the country. He returned to the United States in May last. His communication to the department, detailing the results of his reconnaissance, accompanies this report.

The opinion has heretofore been frequently expressed, that there is no necessity for a squadron of so many guns on the coast of Africa, and that notice should be given to Great Britain, under the terms of the treaty in regard to the suppression of the slave trade, so as to be relieved from obligations. The commerce on that coast has of late years increased so greatly, and American ships trading in that region have multiplied so much, that I am satisfied that the squadron is needed, and is very effective in protecting our citizens, as well as suppressing the slave trade.

formed one of the squadron; but in consequence of the imperfection of her machinery—rendering her entirely useless as a steamer—she was ordered home, and arrived at Philadelphia on the 5th of July. Her engines have been condemned, and new machinery is being constructed for her, with which it is confidently expected she will prove an efficient cruising steamer.

The steamer Saranac, Captain J. C. Long, left Norfolk on the 19th of November, conveying the Hon. Carroll Spence, our newly-appointed minister resident at Constantinople, to that station. After having completed this duty, she will join the Mediterranean squadron.

The vessels of this squadron have been actively co-operating with our representatives in that region—more especially with the Hon. Mr. Marsh, in his efforts to exact justice from the government of Greece to the American missionary, Mr. King. In calling to your attention the movements of this squadron, I cannot omit an especial reference to the conduct of Commander Ingraham, while in command of the St. Louis, at Smyrna. An ocean of thousands of miles separated him from his country, and his small ship was alone in bearing his country's flag. Violence was committed on the personal liberty of a man entitled to the protection of that flag. The perpetrators of the offence outnumbered him in vessels, guns, and men. It was a contest of peril, involving honor and life. With prudence and discretion, yet with promptness and spirit and marked determination, Commander Ingraham gave the protection, and the man is free. Such conduct, under such circumstances, surely entitles an officer to the most significant evidence of his government's approval.

The East India squadron, Commodore Perry, consists of the flag-ship Mississippi, Commander H. A. Adams, his flag-ship, the steamer Ponce, Commander Perry, the sloop-of-war Commodore Buchanan, the sloop-of-war Commodore Abbot, Plymouth, Commander Kelly, Saratoga, Commander Walker, and Commodore Pope; the store-ship Supply, Lieutenant Arthur Sinclair, Southampton, Lieutenant Boyle; and Lexington, Lieutenant Commander Boyle. Commodore Perry, whom Commodore Perry succeeded in command of this squadron, returned to the United States early in the year.

The extraordinary revolutionary movements agitating the millions of China, and threatening the overthrow of the present dynasty, and the hope indulged of the dawning of a new era in the history of trade and commerce with that singular people, imparted unusual importance and urgency to the movements of this squadron. In addition to the ordinary duties of the squadron, Commodore Perry was intrusted with the delicate task of endeavoring to open commercial intercourse with the Japanese government. After visiting several smaller islands, and having favorable interviews with their inhabitants, he proceeded with the steamer Mississippi and the sloop-of-war Saratoga and Commodore Abbot, to Yedo bay, in Japan, where he arrived on the 8th of July last. After much effort he succeeded in having an interview with one of the ministers of State, delivered in person a communication from the President of the United States, proposing to form commercial relations with Japan, gave notice of his intention to return in the ensuing spring for a reply to his proposition; and after making considerable surveys of the coast and harbor, he returned with his squadron to China, to give all needful protection to the interests of Americans.

The Pacific squadron, Commodore Dulany, consists of his flag-ship, the frigate St. Lawrence, Commander William W. Hunter, and the sloop-of-war Portsmouth, Commander Dorwin.

The sloop-of-war St. Mary's, Commander Bailey, left Philadelphia on the 15th of October to join this squadron.

In addition to these vessels, the receiving ship Warren, Lieutenant Stanley, at San Francisco, and the stationary store-ship Fredonia, Lieutenant J. D. Johnson, at Valparaiso, are under the command of Commodore Dulany.

The Fredonia was detached to California under the command of Lieutenant Chastard, with troops; after which she was sent down to Valparaiso, and Lieutenant Chastard was relieved by Lieutenant Johnson, who had been ordered for this purpose, and returned to the United States.

The sloop-of-war St. Mary's, Commander Bailey, which belonged to this squadron at the date of the last report, returned to the United States, at San Francisco, in the month of May, and was placed by my predecessor under the command of Commander Kingdold, should be mentioned. It consists of the sloop-of-war Vincennes, Lieutenant Holand; the brig Porpoise, Lieutenant A. B. Davis; the steamer John Hancock, Lieutenant John Rodgers; the store-ship John P. Kennedy, Lieutenant Collins; and the tender Fenimore Cooper, Master H. K. Stevens. This expedition left the United States in June, and when last heard from had reached Simon's bay, Cape of Good Hope, and was doing well.

The brig Dolphin, Lieut. O. H. Berryman, has recently returned to the United States, having been profitably engaged in special service, under the act of March 3d, 1849, "in testing new routes and perfecting the discoveries made by Lieutenant Maury in the course of his investigations of the winds and currents of the ocean." Much credit is due to the officers employed in executing this law. The hydrographic service, by their efforts, felt justified in materially altering his charts, and much time and distance have been saved to the navigator. The world has been much enlightened as to the depths of the sea, the currents and temperature of the ocean. I am advised that "the deep-sea soundings taken from on board the Dolphin are the most valuable contributions that have been made to science touching this interesting question."

The steamer Michigan, Commander A. B. Bigger, still continues employed on the lakes upon our northern border.

With a view to secure the observance of treaty stipulations, and afford protection to our countrymen engaged in the fisheries on the coasts of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, early in July a special squadron, by your direction, was sent thither, under the command of Commodore Shubrick, consisting of the steamer Princeton, Commander Eagle, the commodore's flag-ship; the sloop-of-war Cyane, Commander Hollins, and the steamer Fulton, Lieutenant Watson. The three last-

named vessels were withdrawn temporarily from the home squadron for this purpose. The squadron returned to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, about the middle of September, some one of the vessels having visited every part of the regions frequented by our fishermen. No complaints were made to Commodore Shubrick by any of illegal or harsh proceedings on the part of the English squadron stationed in those waters, and but one case of seizure was reported to him. This vessel, however, was released upon the payment of the expenses incurred in the admiralty court by the proceedings in the case, notwithstanding the admission by the master of an infraction of the treaty. It is believed that every effort was made to assure our countrymen of protection in the enjoyment of their rights, and that the duties confided to the squadron were executed with fidelity and zeal.

After the return of the squadron, the Albany, Commander Gerry, belonging to the home squadron, was sent on a cruise to the fishing grounds, and returned to New York on the 15th of November, having shown the American flag from the mouth of the St. Lawrence, along the eastern coast of New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's island, and having passed over all the fishing grounds most frequented by our fishermen.

In the fall of 1852, at the earnest request of Lady Franklin, Dr. Kent, an accomplished passed assistant surgeon in the navy, was permitted to engage in special service, in connection with the search for Sir John Franklin and his companions. He sailed from the United States during the past summer. While the officers heretofore engaged in this interesting search acquired much reputation for themselves and their country, I cannot but express my regret that in certain charts uttered from the English Admiralty Hydrographic Office on the 14th of October, 1853, an error has been committed, and credit is given for certain new discoveries of lands to officers of the British navy; whereas, in truth, they have been made, and the lands given a name, by the American expedition under the command of Lieut. De Haven, which passed the English vessels and led the way up Wellington channel in the fall of 1850.

The Naval Observatory, under the superintendence of Lieut. M. F. Maury, is doing much for science and navigation—much for the benefit of mankind and the honor of our country. For a few years past a correspondence had been conducted between the United States and certain other governments on the importance of adopting some plan to secure a more uniform mode of making observations at sea. Ascertaining that various governments designed being represented at Brussels, in pursuance of scientific suggestions with which Lieut. Maury had been conspicuously connected, I felt it my duty to relieve him temporarily from service at the Observatory, with a view to his visiting Brussels. The result of his labors, in conjunction with other eminent persons, will, I have no doubt, prove vastly beneficial to commerce and navigation.

The letters accompanying this report—from Professor Espey respecting his theory of storms, and his meteorological observations, from Lieutenant Charles H. Davis, in regard to the nautical almanac, and from Professor Alexander, touching the scientific investigation and experiments upon the character of alimentary substances—are referred to for information, and are ready for distribution. The report of Lieutenant Gibbon, who was of the same party, but explored a different section of the country, and returned later, is nearly completed.

The indefatigable efforts of Lieutenant Dahlgren to give accuracy and greater effectiveness to gunnery, and to improve the ordnance of the navy, have succeeded well, and none can doubt the advantage the service will experience therefrom.

A law was passed on the 4th of April, 1842, authorizing a contract to be made with Robert L. Stevens, of New York, for constructing an iron war steamer, to be shot and shell proof. Difficulties of various kinds occurred, which resulted in a suspension of the work. In 1852 an act was passed by which the Secretary of the Navy was authorized to suspend the work, and the contract was suspended. The work was completed, with the least possible delay, by a steamer contracted for with Robert L. Stevens, in pursuance of an act of Congress, approved April fourteenth, one thousand eight hundred and forty-two. Aware of the great changes which have been made in the power and destructiveness of guns used on board of ships-of-war since 1842, I expressed an unwillingness to proceed, in execution of the contract, without an understanding that the proposed steamer should be shot and shell proof, not merely against those in use at the enactment of the law of 1842, but also against the improved guns in use at the period of the law of 1852. Having come to a proper understanding in regard to the law, I shall proceed with the execution of the contract.

## Naval Academy.

This interesting institution is rapidly supplying the navy with numbers of educated and accomplished young men, whose early training, discipline, and instruction, under the guidance of learned professors and experienced officers, peculiarly fit them to enter the service. The beneficial results already witnessed demonstrate satisfactorily that it is now sustaining the same relations to the navy that West Point Academy bears to the army.

It is well worthy of the fostering patronage of the government. There are, however, certain facilities not now in existence at the academy, which, in consideration of the fact that steam is being recognized as the powerful agent in naval warfare, I deem all-important to give completeness to the education of an officer. The practice-ship attached to the academy should be a steamer, and there should unquestionably be a machine shop, of cheap and limited character, on the premises. If practice in the sailing vessel has been considered indispensable to improve the students in practical seamanship and navigation, is it not manifestly important, now that steam is the mighty engine for propelling vessels of war, that the practice ship should display to the inquiring youth, in familiar experiment, the practical working of the machinery and the art of regulating and controlling it? How much more secure will be the war steamer engaged in delicate and important service, involving victory or defeat, if offered by a corps skilled in the science of engineering and trained to run and repair an engine, who can manage her destiny, if perchance, disease or accident, or timidity or other causes, shall have deprived them of the engineer.

I feel that I cannot too strongly invite attention to this subject, as, in the progress and ad-

vancement of the age, this early training of the young officer is peculiarly calculated to improve his fitness for responsible service. The communication of the last board of examiners on this subject is appended to this report.

But, in order to familiarize the young midshipmen with all the minute parts of the machinery of a steamship, it is proposed that, on a cheap and small scale, a machine shop be erected on the premises of the academy, embracing a complete collection of the various parts of engines and boilers, with a full set of tools, to be used by the proper professor in imparting instruction in his department of mechanics.

There are now at the institution one hundred and sixteen students. The first class, under the regulations of 1850, will graduate in June next. Captain Stribling was, on the 1st of November last, relieved from his command as superintendent, after a connexion with the academy for more than three years. I take pleasure in bearing testimony to the uniform diligence and marked abilities with which Capt. Stribling has discharged his arduous and responsible duties. The prosperity of the institution and the records of this department attest his fidelity. He is succeeded by Commander Goldsborough, an accomplished officer, who has recently returned from the Mediterranean squadron.

Your attention is invited to the report in reference to the academy from the Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography, the annual report of the board of examiners in relation to the discipline and organization of the academy, and also the report of the commandant of midshipmen as to the late cruise of the practice-ship Preble.

I concur in the opinion often expressed in reports heretofore submitted to the Executive, that it would be good policy to authorize the President to appoint annually ten midshipmen "at large." It is well known that this rule exists in regard to cadets at the West Point military academy. Its application to the naval academy will extend the benefit of the institution to a class of youths who, under the present system of restriction to a residence in congressional districts and to representative recommendation, are excluded.

## Yards and Docks.

I have visited the navy-yards at Kittery, Charlestown, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Portsmouth, Virginia. The public property at these several yards was generally in excellent condition under the careful superintendence of the commandant, and the business of the government conducted with discipline and system.

The contractors for building the dock, basin, and railway at Pensacola having reported that they had executed the contract, arrangements were made for testing the work, in accordance with the terms of the agreement. The frigate Columbia, of the home squadron, was the ship assigned for that purpose, and a board was appointed to superintend the experiment. A full report was made by the board unfavorable to the contractors, who were notified that the work could not, therefore, be accepted. Deeming it of great importance to the ships-of-war cruising in that vicinity, as well as to the commercial marine, that there should be a dock at Pensacola, and in consideration of the money expended, I was unwilling hastily to abandon the work.

It is due, perhaps, to the contractors, to state that, notwithstanding the unanimous unfavorable report of the board, consisting of a naval constructor, civil engineer, and an officer of the army and of the navy, they contended that the board had not applied a fair test.

I have consented to suspend taking action against the contractors, until repairs are made, and another test applied at their own expense and risk, which, it is understood, will be made at an early day.

During the late session of Congress an appropriation was made for erecting buildings at the navy-yard at San Francisco, and "to complete and carry into execution the verbal contract for those and other buildings, in connection with the floating dock, as made by the late secretary." Mare island was the site purchased, and paid for on the 2d of March last.

The law provided expressly that the money for the erection of buildings, &c., at the navy-yard, should not be expended until the Attorney General gave an opinion that the title was good and sufficient. The question was given that the title of the United States was not sufficient. Under the circumstances, the money thus appropriated was not expended. Efforts are being made, however, to perfect the title. A navy-yard is very much needed in California, and no time will be lost in accomplishing the work so soon as the legal impediment can be removed.

The question of the necessity, and usefulness to the public service, of the construction of a basin and railway in connection with the sectional dock in California, became a matter of investigation soon after I entered upon the duties of the department. Fourteen hundred and fifty thousand dollars was the amount originally agreed upon for the sectional floating dock in combination with the basin and railway. Subsequently the contract was suspended, as to the basin and railway, and it was agreed that six hundred and ten thousand dollars should be paid for the dock. The construction of the basin and railway, submitted to the discretion of the department by the act of the last Congress, involves an expenditure of eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The question to the necessity of the basin raises the inquiry whether this species of dock is so formed that it would be unsafe to place a vessel on it for extensive repairs, unless protected by that structure. The sectional floating dock is composed of ten separate and independent sections. Unless it has the protection of a quiet harbor, it would necessarily be much affected by the undulating motion of the waves, and by much of the power of the winds. When a vessel is placed on the dock and floated into a basin, it may remain there for months' repairs without any danger from storms. My predilections are very decidedly in favor of stone docks; but Congress has decided that a sectional floating dock is preferable in California. I entertain the opinion that a basin is necessary, to render it perfectly safe when a large vessel is docked for repairs, which may require it to months of dangerous weather.

As to the usefulness to the public service, my opinion is, that as it is proposed to build by this one dock on the Pacific coast, it would be rendered doubly useful by having the basin and railway, by which many vessels could be accommodated at the same time. Although the railway would be useful to the public service, I am not prepared to say that it is necessary. The opinion having been given by the Attorney General that the title of the United States to the land purchased for a navy-yard was not good, I have declined to make any contract for building the basin and railway. On examination I ascertained that the contractors had entered into a separate agreement with the gov-

ernment to erect a pier to secure the dock for three years only, and dock the vessels of the navy, provided they were allowed to charge for docking merchant ships for that space of time. It is expected that the difficulties as to the title will be removed at the approaching session of the legislature of California, when I shall proceed to execute a contract for the basin, unless Congress shall otherwise direct.

The sale of the portion of land attached to the navy-yard at Brooklyn, directed by the act of the last Congress, for reasons set forth in the letter from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, has been postponed. The letter accompanies this report.

The suggestions made by those who have preceded me, touching the policy of a naval establishment at New Orleans, are commended to a favorable consideration; provided, however, it is previously ascertained by proper surveys that the bar will admit of the approach of vessels-of-war. The resolutions of the Senate, directing the Secretary of the Navy to report whether it would be advantageous to the government to establish naval depots at Newport, Rhode Island, and at or near Beaufort, North Carolina, will be made the subject of a special communication to the Senate so soon as sufficient information is received from parties now making surveys.

Commander Blake, of the navy, was despatched to Key West, Florida, in October last, for the purpose of making arrangements for carrying into execution the act of July 21, 1852, for establishing a coal depot for naval purposes at that place. His accompanying letter explains the progress made.

## Rules and Regulations.

Attention has been repeatedly invited by my predecessors to the importance of further legislation on the subject of rules and regulations for the government of the navy.

The law for "the better government of the navy" was approved in April, 1800. This law passed more than half a century ago, still exists for the government of the navy, having been but little altered, with the exception of that part of it relating to corporal punishment. Many amendments of that law, with a view to economy of time and money, have been rendered important and necessary on account of the great expansion of our country. It is not adapted to our present condition. When it was passed, our ships-of-war on the coasts of Florida, Texas, and California were "acting out of the United States," and its provisions as to courts-martial could be conveniently enforced. But if a large squadron should be at San Francisco, however important early action might be for convening or dissolving a court-martial, there must now be delay until the department at Washington can issue the necessary orders in each case.

The "Rules and Regulations" were adopted in 1818, under the act of 1815. They need much modification. In December, 1852, a board was convened for that purpose, under an order from the Secretary of the Navy. They reported a system of rules, which were approved by the late Executive in February, and a few copies were issued to the officers. A question, however, having arisen as to the authority of the Executive to adopt this system of orders and instructions without the sanction of Congress, and the opinion of the Attorney General having been that without the sanction of Congress they were illegal, by your direction an order was issued rescinding them.

Controversies between the sea and civil officers of the navy, in regard to rank, have arisen, and will continue, until adjusted by legislation.

I see no objection to the assignment of a proper rank to the civil officers of the navy—not merely as a gratification of pride, but to prevent discord. It exists in other navies, and in our army.

## Increase of the Navy.

The result of my investigation of this subject is a decided conviction that the maintenance of our proper and elevated rank among the great powers of the world, the just protection of our commerce, and the growing commerce; the defense of our thousands of miles of coast along the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the lakes and the Gulf of Mexico; the recent marked improvements in the art of naval architecture adopted by other nations—all unite in demonstrating the policy, the necessity, of an increase of the navy. It is true, indeed, our policy is wise, of late of dominion, no spirit of aggression, marks our course. Our national mission is, by the moral force of our nation, to illustrate the blessings of liberty and peace, civilization and religion. But the reasonable inquiry is, can peace be best maintained by the exhibition of comparative weakness, or by a display of strength and a preparation which, while it invites not a conflict, at least defies assaults? What are the objects of a navy? what the considerations to guide us to a correct conclusion as to the size and character of the naval force of a republic situated geographically and politically as the United States? Do not wisdom and prudence admonish the careful statesman, in his calculations for the future, while he takes thought of the commerce, the rights, the coast to be protected by this right arm of defense, at the same time not to forget the comparative force, efficiency, and character of the navies of the great powers with whom, with all our cherished love of peace, we may have to contend? Is it the suggestion of a sound discretion to rely exclusively upon the sudden preparation of a patriotic people, when the perilous emergency starts up before them, and shut our eyes with quiet composure to our real condition? Or is it wisest to make the preparation which a considerate glance at the true state of facts shall persuade us is essential to our security?

I believe that it is only necessary to present the case as it truly exists, to the attention of those who have the power, to produce the desired results.

The American navy consists of about seventy vessels, embracing all, from the ships-of-war, down to the smallest brig, schooner, and store-ship. Of these, many ships-of-the-line, frigates, steamers, and sloop-of-war are not only unfit for service, but I am advised by the Bureau of Construction, Equipment, and Repair, are not worth repairing. These are not now in the navy forty vessels which could be brought into service in ninety days, if needed. There is in our navy much less than one-fifth of that of several of the greater powers of Europe, and whatever may be its relative superiority and efficiency, is not larger than that of certain other powers of Europe which are not of the first rank in the scale of nations.

And however much we may desire to cultivate terms of amity, these are the powers with whom we are most likely to contend in future

conflicts, and the great deep is the theatre on which future contests may be decided. I am not unmindful of the mighty development of strength and force which the patriotism, the energy, the nautical skill, and mercantile marine of a great nation would soon rally to our assistance. Other nations, in addition to the large navies, have their immense mercantile marine and their steamships also. But, again, what have we to defend and protect? We have an Atlantic coast of more than two thousand miles, stretching from the Rio Grande to the St. Croix, studded with magnificent cities, and thriving towns. We now have a Pacific coast extending for many hundred miles, from the confines of Mexico to the far northwest—an inviting country, rapidly populating, totally unfortified, separated by mountains and deserts from the military power of the government.

A new empire has, as by magic, sprung into existence. San Francisco promises at no distant day to become another New York, and our prosperous trade in the Pacific, amid the wonders of commerce, in line the same relation to China and Japan which that of the Atlantic coast bears to the continent of Europe and Great Britain. We have over four millions of tonnage; American vessels, freighted with goods, are everywhere, penetrating every sea; and thousands of our countrymen, whose busy enterprise has borne to distant lands, or whom misfortune has wrecked on some inhospitable shore, all look to their country's flag to protect them. Is our present navy sufficient for all these great purposes of defence and protection? I am very far from intimating an opinion that we should not steadily maintain a naval force as large as that of some of the powers mentioned. They have large colonial settlements on islands and continents remote from their seat of government. Their jealousies, their proximity to each other, their peculiar form of government, all combine to require for their purposes a far larger naval force than we need. But, while they are engaged in enlarging theirs, shall we allow ours to annually become greater? The following warning admonition on this point by Washington, in his eighth annual message, enforces this view: "To an active external commerce, the protection of a naval force is indispensable. This is manifest with regard to wars in which a State itself is a party. But, besides this, it is in our own experience that the most sincere ally is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war. To secure respect to a neutral flag requires a naval force, organized and ready to vindicate it from insult and aggression. This may prevent even the necessity of going to war, by discouraging belligerent powers from committing such violations of the rights of the neutral party as may first or last leave no other option, except the war of extermination." The following words, when the steamship Princeton returned from her cruise on the fishing grounds, to be repaired merely, she had to leave the navy-yard for a private establishment. The government can avail itself, when necessary, of the skill of private establishments; but it is submitted whether it is not wise to have a few machine-shops, in which the supervision and judgment of its own superintending officers, exercised as to material, workmanship, and time.

I cannot allow this occasion to pass without an allusion to the repeated failures in our steamships-of-war, to fulfil the public expectation. I deemed it my duty to order a searching investigation into the causes of these deplorable disasters, and appointed a board of three engineers and one constructor, to inquire and report to the department the causes of the failures, and the parties who were responsible. Their report is on file in the department, which may be thought from the facts which it discloses. I have endeavored to endeavor to throw around recent contracts safeguards, by reserving the payment of one-half of the compact price until the work is completed and successfully tested, which I trust may insure good results. I unhesitatingly renew the recommendation heretofore made, of the importance of establishing machine-shops at several navy-yards on the Atlantic, and at San Francisco, on the Pacific coast, for the construction and repair of machinery for steamships-of-war. Recent occurrences have multiplied cogent arguments in favor of that policy. With the exception of limited arrangements in the Washington navy-yard, the government is entirely dependent upon private contractors. The yard at New York is regarded as large and useful, and well adapted by its plans for purposes of construction. The same is the case with the yard at Princeton returned from her cruise on the fishing grounds, to be repaired merely, she had to leave the navy-yard for a private establishment. The government can avail itself, when necessary, of the skill of private establishments; but it is submitted whether it is not wise to have a few machine-shops, in which the supervision and judgment of its own superintending officers, exercised as to material, workmanship, and time.

It is submitted, also, that it is important that the department be authorized, when expedient, to increase the enlistment of men from the present number of 7,500 to 10,000.

The suggestions of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, in relation to the propriety of increasing the number of the medical corps of the navy, are commended to a favorable consideration.

The recommendations in the report from the commandant of the marine corps are entitled to consideration. For the preservation of discipline on shipboard and active service in emergency on shore, the importance of this corps cannot be too highly appreciated. The improvement of the medical corps, the several provisions specified in the report, the increase of the corps, the policy of adopting some plan for securing the services of officers educated and disciplined as the officers of the army and navy, are subjects deserving attention.

This corps has ever been found faithful and useful. I am clearly of opinion that it should be enlarged, for in its present state it cannot do more than to be a constant drain on the treasury. The service of officers and men is frequently demanded before it is possible to qualify them properly with sufficient drilling.

I have thus frankly presented my views of the policy and importance of enlarging our naval force.

## Reorganization of the Navy.

I cannot withhold the expression of my opinion that the present organization of the navy is not only essentially defective and unwise, but is in its present state a constant drain on the treasury, and a serious mischief to the efficiency and character of that branch of the public service.

I am not insensible to the fact that proposals for radical reform, however much suggested by the results of experience, observation, or reflection, are often viewed with distrust and doubt, as rash innovations upon familiar and long established systems—clung to, sometimes, with tenacity and abandoned generally, with distrust. From a sense of justice to the service and duty to the government, I venture to expose to view some of those defects, and briefly recommend remedies by which, it is hoped, they may be, to some extent, removed. This subject has long attracted the attention of those whose occupation or association has brought them in contact with the navy, and as it has more recently been the subject of public and private discussion, the public great solicitude is felt, great hope is entertained, that the much-needed relief will be no longer delayed.

The great evil in our present system is, that neither merit, nor sea-service, nor gallantry, nor capacity, but mere seniority of commission regulates promotion and pay. The gallant, chivalrous men of the navy feel subdued, disgraced, and discouraged; the able and efficient, the fire of their young ambition and pride is well extinguished, many are leaving the service to which they have so long fondly clung; many remain only because of the cherished expectation of reform. The officer who encounters all the perils of the deep, wins the admiration of the world for his brilliant achievements, and makes his countrymen prouder than his tale, but to feel mortified in seeing the indolent, the imbecile, who have known no toils, and have never met the enemy, daily promoted over him. It is true that the executive has power, to some extent, to interfere and exercise a discretion as to promotion; but so fixed and well-settled has been the almost uniform course since the organization of the navy, of promoting according to seniority of commission, that the effort by any executive to deviate from it with-

cutly procured, we have on hand at the various yards, ample material to accomplish what is recommended. It will be perceived, on referring to the estimates of the Bureau of Construction, &c., that an estimate is made of the entire cost of the cost without purchasing any material, and of the probable amount which would be expended during the fiscal year without regard to great-dispatch. This was done in order that the subject might be understood properly, and that such action might be taken as appeared wisest. As it is deemed desirable to make this addition to our naval forces as early as practicable, in consideration of the number of vessels which will soon be out of service, and the cost of repairing and as it is important to retain on hand, for emergency, a reasonable supply of building material, I venture to suggest the policy of making the appropriation at an early day, to enable the department to build them with dispatch, and purchase a supply of material, so as not to diminish the amount on hand.

There are two frigates—the San Jose, at Kittery, and the Sabina at New York—which have been on the stocks since 1819. They can be altered and made to conform to modern improvements, and be most useful substitutes for two frigates of the same class withdrawn as worthless. I recommend that they be thus reconstructed and equipped, at the expense of the cost will be furnished, should the suggestion be adopted. The old-ship-of-the-line, the Franklin, is being repaired at Kittery, and her model much changed, with a view of converting her into a first class steam frigate.

Should these recommendations be adopted, our naval force will be materially strengthened by the addition of two first-class sailing frigates and of seven first-class steam frigates, capable of mounting 50 guns each—there being no steamer at present of more than ten guns. My opinion is, that it would be sound policy to dispose of such vessels as are deemed unfit for service as vessels of war.

I cannot allow this occasion to pass without an allusion to the repeated failures in our steamships-of-war, to fulfil the public expectation. I deemed it my duty to order a searching investigation into the causes of these deplorable disasters, and appointed a board of three engineers and one constructor, to inquire and report to the department the causes of the failures, and the parties who were responsible. Their report is on file in the department, which may be thought from the facts which it discloses. I have endeavored to endeavor to throw around recent contracts safeguards, by reserving the payment of one-half of the compact price until the work is completed and successfully tested, which I trust may insure good results. I unhesitatingly renew the recommendation heretofore made, of the importance of establishing machine-shops at several navy-yards on the Atlantic, and at San Francisco, on the Pacific coast, for the construction and repair of machinery for steamships-of-war. Recent occurrences have multiplied cogent arguments in favor of that policy. With the exception of limited arrangements in the Washington navy-yard, the government is entirely dependent upon private contractors. The yard at New York is regarded as large and useful, and well adapted by its plans for purposes of construction. The same is the case with the yard at Princeton returned from her cruise on the fishing grounds, to be repaired merely, she had to leave the navy-yard for a private establishment. The government can avail itself, when necessary, of the skill of private establishments; but it is submitted whether it is not wise to have a few machine-shops, in which the supervision and judgment of its own superintending officers, exercised as to material, workmanship, and time.

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